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APPARATUS, AND ASSOCIATED METHOD, FOR PROVIDING A CLIENT WITH
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ABSTRACT:

Apparatus, and an associated method, provides OOB (out-of-band) and other asynchronous messages to a mobile client. OOB and other asynchronous messages formed of alerts, notifications, push messages, advertising, as well as many other types of messages, are able to be provided to the client. The OOB and other asynchronous messages are provided to the client by a gateway, such as a WAP gateway operable in a communication system pursuant to the WAP standard.

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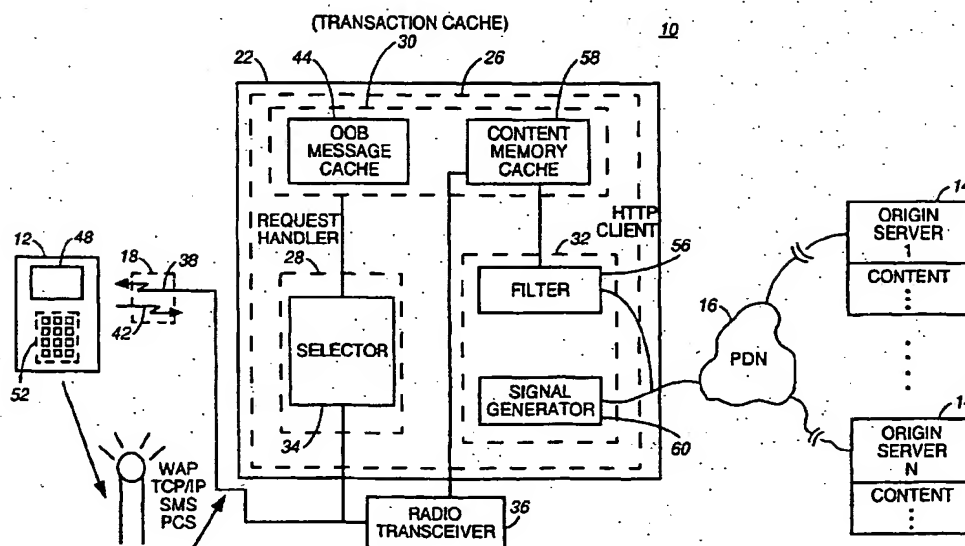
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(54) Title: APPARATUS, AND ASSOCIATED METHOD, FOR PROVIDING A CLIENT WITH MESSAGES



(57) Abstract: Apparatus, and an associated method, provides OOB (out-of-band) and other asynchronous messages to a mobile client. OOB and other asynchronous messages formed of alerts, notifications, push messages, advertising, as well as many other types of messages, are able to be provided to the client. The OOB and other asynchronous messages are provided to the client by a gateway, such as a WAP gateway operable in a communication system pursuant to the WAP standard.

APPARATUS, AND ASSOCIATED METHOD, FOR PROVIDING A CLIENT WITH MESSAGES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to communications between a
5 client and a content source in a communication system such as a radio part,
e.g., a radio part employing the WAP (Wireless Application Protocol)
standard. More particularly, the present invention relates to an apparatus and
an associated method for providing OOB (Out-of-Band) and other
asynchronous messages to the client.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Advancements in communication technologies have permitted the
introduction and popularization of new types of communication systems. As a
result of such advancements, e.g., significant increases in the rates of data
transmission have been permitted and new types of communication services
15 have also been made possible. Advancements in digital communication
techniques are amongst the advancements in communication technologies
which have permitted the introduction of new types of communication
systems.

A radio communication system is exemplary of a type of
20 communication system which has benefited from advancements in
communication technologies and the use of digital communication techniques.
In a radio communication system, at least a portion of a communication path
formed during communications therein includes a radio-link. Improvements
in communication mobility are provided through use of a radio
25 communication system as communication channels defined upon the radio-
link in such a system are formed of radio channels and do not require wireline
connections for their formation. The portion of the communication system

which includes the radio-link is sometimes referred to as the radio part of the communication system.

Digital communication techniques have been utilized in radio communication systems, thereby permitting improvement of communication capacities in such systems as well as permitting the implementation of new communication services. For instance, packet radio services are possible through the use of digital communication techniques. Such packet radio services have been proposed for several radio communication systems to permit the communication of packet data. The communication of packet data, in general, involves the formatting of groups of digital bits into packets to form packets of data. The packets of data are communicated, either individually, or in groups, at discrete intervals. Once received, the packets of data are concatenated together to recreate the informational content of the digital bit of which the packets are formed.

Examples of packet radio services which have been proposed, or already implemented, include multi-media services, messaging services, distribution services, dispatching services, and retrieval services. Retrieval of content provided pursuant to the World Wide Web (www) of the Internet is exemplary of a retrieval service.

Revenues which support the content providers of content retrievable pursuant to the www are typically generated through subscription payment, service charges, click fees, and advertising. In a subscription payment, a user pays a cyclic, for example, monthly, quarterly, yearly, etc., fee in order to access the services and contents that are retrieved. Service charge refer to charges paid by a user to receive performance of a service. Click fees refer to charges accruing to a user based upon simple metrics, such as links followed, duration of contact, or other measurable use of a content source. And, advertising refers to third party payments to a content provider for the display of promotional messages, typically including the links which permit a user to follow the links to obtain additional content regarding the advertised material.

Generally, existing retrieval services over the www are effectuated by a user of a conventional computer, such as a personal computer. Content is displayed in the form of screens displayable upon a conventional computer screen, or the like. Both desired informational content as well as advertising regularly forms a single screen. Therefore, when a user uses the desired content, the advertising message is also displayed.

However, in a radio communication system, the client, that is, the mobile station or other device utilized by a user, shall not necessarily, and perhaps shall likely not, have a display element of dimensions permitting the display of a screen containing both the informational content and the advertising. Network systems employing the WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) standard utilizing OOB (Out-of-Band) messaging have been proposed. When using OOB messaging, advertising is displayed on the display element of the mobile station, hereinafter referred to as the "client," and thereafter the informational content is displayed on the display element of the mobile station.

Push messages, that is, asynchronous notifications, as well as alerts, and notification are also exemplary OOB messages. While the aforementioned WAP standard is permitting of the transport of OOB messages, such as push messages, the existing WAP standard fails to define a push mechanism.

Difficulties are, however, associated with retrieval services, in which content is to be provided to a portable mobile station. That is to say, in a conventional system, a content provider provides both the content as well as the advertising. Special hardware and software for the computer server from which the content and advertising originates is required. The need for such special hardware and software at the computer server used by the content provider increases its complexity.

It would be advantageous, therefore, if a manner could be devised which could better provide OOB messages to the client pursuant to retrieval services.

It would be further advantageous if a manner could be devised which could better provide asynchronous communications, such as push messages, alerts, and notifications. Generally, existing manners utilize polling by the client. Several disadvantages are associated with polling, however. For instance, when the client sends a polling message, the client must wait for a response, preventing the client from performing other functions while awaiting a response to the polling message. Also, generation of the polling message results in additional signaling overhead.

It is in light of this background information related to the communication of OOB and other asynchronous messages that the significant improvements of the present invention have evolved.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention, accordingly, advantageously provides an apparatus and an associated method for providing OOB (Out-of-Band) and other asynchronous messages to a client in a communication system which includes a radio part.

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The OOB and other asynchronous messages are provided to the client by, e.g., a radio part gateway which forms at least part of the communication path upon which communications with the client are effectuated. In a communication system which employs the WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) standard, the gateway may be a WAP gateway.

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In one aspect of the present invention, asynchronous, OOB messages are provided to the client. Alerts, notifications, and push messages are exemplary of asynchronous messages. PIM notifications, paging services, and location-based notifications all are exemplary of services possible pursuant to operation of an embodiment of the present invention.

In another aspect of the present invention, OOB messages are provided by the gateway to the client responsive to requests made by the client for content from a content provider. When an initial request is made for initial content, the request is communicated by way of the gateway to the content source. When the content is returned by the content source, the content is provided to a filter which at least selectably parses the content to detect links in the content selectable by a user, when displayed at the client, or additional content. The links identify URLs of locations at which the additional content is sourced. The filter flags URLs within the content so that the gateway is aware that OOB messages can be provided when selection is made at the client to request such additional content. The original, initial content is then provided to the client together with URL modifications to permit flagging of possible OOB message URLs. When selection is made at the client to request such additional content, the request is provided to a gateway.

When detected at the gateway, an OOB message, such as an advertising display, is returned to the client and, the gateway generates a substitute request which is forwarded to the content source at which the additional content is sourced. The OOB message is thereby displayed at the client during the pendency of the substitute request for the additional content generated by the gateway.

In one embodiment, the OOB message is displayed at the client for at least a minimum, selected time period, subsequent to which the client generates a new request for the additional content, which, if necessary, is stored at the gateway subsequent to retrieval from the content source of the additional content. Filtering of the additional content further permits additional OOB messages to be provided to the client in analogous manners during pendency of subsequent requests. In an exemplary implementation, the communication system can include a radio part which is operable pursuant to the WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) standard. The radio part interfaces with a WAP gateway through which all communications with the client are

routed. However, a radio part is not necessary for routing client communications. Other communication paths can include for example POTS and PSTN and other known mediums and protocols.

5 An embodiment of the present invention forms additional apparatus for a gateway through which an owner, or operator, of the gateway is provided with the capability to send OOB messages to a client which utilizes the gateway for communications. OOB messages are displayed, e.g., during an interval between a request originating from the client and a reply returning from the content source, typically an origin server. The OOB messages can
10 contain any type of content and can be used for any application in which OOB messaging is appropriate. An OOB message forming an advertising display is an exemplary message which is communicated to the client during operation of an embodiment of the present invention. In alternate implementations, asynchronous messages, such as push messages, are provided to the client.

15 In an embodiment of the present invention, advantage is made of the communication path which extends between the client and content source of the communication system which may include a WAP, or other wireless-protocol, part. All communications with the client in such a communication system typically must pass through the gateway. Wireless communication
20 system implementation is predicated on the traditional, narrow bandwidth of wireless connections, in contrast to conventional wireline communication paths. Because of the narrow band width, the rate of data transfer on a wireless-link is relatively slow. The WAP standard requires that all content communicated upon the wireless-link be encoded prior to its transmission to
25 the client. And, when a request is originated at a client and communicated upon a wireless-link, request headers of the request must be decoded prior to forwarding of the request by the gateway to the content source. In other words, the WAP, or other gateway, forms a central point of contact between client and content source during operation of the system. Advantage is taken

of the fact that the gateway is the central point of contact during operation of the various embodiments of the present invention.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a manner is provided by which to send asynchronous information generated by a server to a client, such as a mobile station operable in a cellular or other wireless communication system. The asynchronous information is provided to the client without utilization of a conventional polling technique. Because conventional polling techniques are not utilized, delays are conventionally associated with utilization of conventional polling techniques. The asynchronous messages are provided to the client through the use of existing client-initiated protocols. Therefore, operation of an embodiment of the present invention to provide the client with asynchronous messages can be utilized by existing communication systems. Additionally, asynchronous messages generated by different sources can be provided to the client simultaneously. And, the asynchronous messages are provided to the client without significant additional signaling traffic, such as that required when utilizing conventional polling techniques.

In these and other aspects, therefore, an apparatus, and an associated method, is provided for a gateway of a communication system in which data is communicated between a client and at least a first content source upon a communication path. The gateway provides an Out-of-Band message to the client. An Out-of-Band message source is coupled to receive at least one Out-of-Band message, the at least one Out-of-Band message selectably to be communicated to the client. A selector is coupled to the Out-of-Band message source. The selector selects whether to communicate to the client a selected Out-of-Band message to which the Out-of-Band message source is coupled to receive.

Further, in these and other aspects, an apparatus, and an associated method, is provided for a communication system having a client operable to communicate with an origin server by way of a communication path.

Communication of an asynchronous message upon the communication path to the client is facilitated. A request detector is coupled to receive a first request generated by the client. The first request is generated by the client for a first server-initiated reply message. A push message generator is operable responsive to detection of the request detector of the first request. The push message generator substitutes a push message for the first server-initiated reply message and sends the push message upon the communication path to the client. The push message forms the asynchronous message.

A more complete description of the present invention and the scope thereof can be obtained from the accompanying drawings which are briefly summarized below, the following detailed description of the presently-preferred embodiments of the invention, and the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 illustrates a functional block diagram of a communication system in which an embodiment of the present invention is operable.

Figure 2 illustrates a sequence diagram listing the sequence of signal generation during operation of the communication system shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 illustrates a sequence diagram, similar to that shown in Figure 2, also listing the sequence of signal generation during operation of the communication system shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4 illustrates a sequence diagram, similar to those shown in Figures 2-3, also listing the sequence of signal generation during operation of the communication system shown in Figure 1.

Figure 5 illustrates a functional block diagram of a communication system in which another embodiment of the present invention is operable.

Figure 6 illustrates a sequence diagram listing the sequence of signals generated during operation of an embodiment of the present invention embodied in the communication system shown in Figure 5.

Figure 7 illustrates a functional block diagram of a distributed network in which a push service provided pursuant to an embodiment of the present invention is operable.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

5 Referring first to Figure 1, a communication system, shown generally at 10, provides for the communication of packet data between a client 12 and a selected origin server 14. The communication system includes a wireline portion, including a packet data network 16 to which the origin servers 14 are connected. In the embodiment shown in Figure 1, the communication system
10 includes a radio part including a radio-link 18 by which to effectuate radio communications with the client. A WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) gateway 22 also forms a portion of the communication system. All communications between the client 12 and an origin server 14 pass through the gateway 22. While, in the exemplary implementation, the radio part of the
15 radio communication system is constructed to be operable pursuant to a WAP standard, in other implementations the communication system is operable pursuant to other standards.

While the embodiment discussed uses a wireless link to a mobile station, neither a wireless link nor a mobile station are necessary to realize the
20 advantages of the present disclosure. For example, other clients can be substituted for the mobile station described in Figure 1. Such clients can include, for example, a computer. For another example, other communication links can be used in place of the radio part described. Such communication channels can include, for example, POTS PSTN, ISDN, ADSL, XDSL, PLMN,
25 WLAN, or other appropriate communication schemes can be used.

In addition to apparatus required for conventional operation of the WAP gateway to perform encoding and decoding operations of content to be provided to the client 12 and signals received by the client, the gateway is operable pursuant to an embodiment of the present invention to provide OOB

(Out-of-Band) messages to the client. The apparatus, shown at 26, includes a request handler 28, a transaction cache 30, and an HTTP client 32. Functions performed by the handler, transaction cache, and HTTP client are shown in block form in the Figure. Such functions are exemplary, and operation of an embodiment of the present invention can alternately be implemented in other manners. And, while in the exemplary implementation, the WAP gateway 22 and apparatus 26 thereof are shown to be physically separated from the origin servers 14, such devices can also be co-located. However, the functionality of such separate devices remain distinguishable.

10 The request handler 28 is here shown to include a selector 34. The selector is here shown to be coupled to a radio transceiver 36 capable of transceiving communication signals with the client 12 on the radio-link 18. The radio-link 18 is shown to include a forward link 38 and a reverse link 42. The selector is further coupled to an OOB message cache 44. The selector is
15 operable to select whether to provide an OOB message stored at the cache 44 to the client 12. The OOB messages are permanently stored at the message cache, or are provided thereto from an external location, here indicated by way of the line 46.

 When selection is made by the selector 34 to provide the client with an
20 OOB message, the OOB message is communicated to the client on the forward link 38 by the radio transceiver 36 which, for instance, is formed of a radio base station. The link from the radio transceiver to the gateway transports digital data. The digital data can be either streaming or packetized with protocols such as TCP/IP, SMS, PCS, WAP, or other suitable protocol. The
25 OOB message selected to be communicated to the client may, for instance, be an asynchronous message, such as a push message, an alert, or other notification. Once provided to the client, the OOB message is displayed upon a display element 48 of the client. In one implementation, the asynchronous OOB message remains displayed at the display element of the client until a

user actuates an appropriate user actuation key 52 of the client to remove the OOB message from the display.

In a further embodiment of the present invention, a user of the client is able to request content stored at an origin server 14 to be retrieved therefrom and displayed at the display element 48 of the client. When the content is requested, a request, is generated on the reverse link channel 42 and detected at the gateway. Retrieval services pursuant to the World Wide Web/Internet is exemplary of this operation when the PDN 16 is representative of the Internet backbone. When a request is an initial request for content, the request is forwarded to the appropriate origin server. The origin server and the contents therein are identified, for instance, by a URL. Responsive to the request, the content is retrieved from the origin server and returned to the HTTP client 32 of the gateway 22.

The content is provided to a filter 56 which is selectably operable to pass the retrieved content to identify hyperlinks contained in the retrieved content which form links to other content. When the hyperlinks are detected, the filter flags the URLs within the content. Thereby the gateway is able to provide OOB messages when the client subsequently requests the additional content identified by the hyperlinks. The filter generates an output which is formed of the original content, together with URL modifications needed to flag possible OOB message URLs. Then, the content is forwarded to the client.

When the user of the client requests additional content, an additional request is generated on the reverse link 42 for such additional content. When the additional request is detected at the gateway, the URL identified in the additional request contains a flagged URL. The selector of the gateway is able to select an OOB message from the message cache 44 to be returned to the client to be displayed at the display element 48. And, a substitute request is generated by the substitute request generator to be communicated to the appropriate origin server to retrieve the additional content. During pendency

of the retrieval of the actual content, the OOB message is displayed at the display element of the client. If, conversely, a selection is made not to send any OOB messages to the client, the request process is started over again, such process described previously.

5 When the substitute request is generated, a new request ID unique to this request is created and the OOB message is immediately provided to the client as a reply to the additional request. The OOB message includes an anchor or action that requests a URL pointing to an entry in the transaction cache of the gateway which is identified by the unique request identification.

10 As the OOB message is provided on the forward link 38 to the client, the substitute request is forwarded to the appropriate origin server 14 to retrieve the contents stored thereat. When the additional content is returned, the additional content is filtered by the filter 56 of the HTTP client to flag additional, relevant URLs for subsequent OOB messaging. The output
15 generated by the filter is stored, if necessary, at a content memory cache 58 of the transaction cache.

 In the exemplary implementation, the OOB message displayed at the display element 48 during performance of such retrieval service is displayed thereat for at least a selected time period. When such time period times out, a
20 request is automatically generated by the client for the actual content. The request is communicated over the reverse link 42 of the radio-link 18. And, responsive thereto, the content stored at the memory cache is retrieved and provided to the client. Thereby, the initial content and the additional content is displayed at the display element, interspersed with an OOB message.

25 Subsequent fetches repeat the same process.

 The disclosed innovations may be implemented without modifying the URL with a flag. By a lookup table method within the gateway, the same results may be achieved without modifying the URLs received from the content source other similar methods can be used.

A manner is thereby provided by which to provide OOB messages to the client whenever the client connects to the Internet. Applications at the respective origin servers need not be aware of the operation of the apparatus 26 of the gateway for either the application or the OOB mechanism to function. A number of services are thereby able to be provided seamlessly and independently of the provider of the content stored at the origin server or the origin server.

For instance, advertising and promotional messages form the OOB messages stored at the message cache 44. Such advertising and promotional messages are independent decks that contain any legal WAP content, such as WML, WML script, etc. Complex advertising messages, such as images, animations, and other multi-media, can thereby be transferred to the client as an OOB message.

As the content of the OOB message is controlled by the owner or operator of the WAP gateway 22, assurances can be made as to how often, and with what duration, the OOB message shall be displayed at the display element 48 of the client. By forming the advertising messages to be separate WML decks, problems associated with bloating of the content decks is avoided. Such is particularly important in WAP where devices typically have limits on their permitted deck sizes. Also, a developer and content provider need not exert effort on incorporating revenue-generating messages into their application and content as such efforts are performed by the operator of the WAP gateway.

A number of different strategies for providing advertising and promotional messages are permitted. For instance, autonomous control is permitted. In autonomous control, the WAP gateway operator controls, signs, and regulates autonomously all advertising and promotional messages. That is to say, the WAP gateway operator decides what advertisers are permitted, and how frequently messages are permitted to be shown. Revenues generated by such advertising accrues to the WAP gateway operator. In this scheme, the

WAP gateway operator need not differentiate the target origin server of the client in selecting which message to promote. The WAP gateway operator is, however, permitted to make such selections. For instance, sponsors of some advertising messages may not want their advertising message associated with certain content.

Another strategy is a content selective strategy. Here, the WAP gateway operator is able to target individual WAP service in content providers to offer such providers the advertising and promotional messages for an appropriate fee. The system would then only display advertising and messages specific to a particular origin server pursuant to agreement between the WAP gateway operator and the operator of the appropriate origin server.

Also, a user profile strategy is possible. The WAP gateway owner is able to create user profiles of users of the client in order to tailor messages to a specific target group. Such strategy would permit the WAP gateway operator to provide sponsors the additional guarantee of reaching a desired target market. Such a strategy would also have the benefit of not inconveniencing users of the clients with irrelevant messages. Combinations of the strategies are also possible.

Through operation of an embodiment of the present invention, a push mechanism is provided for communicating asynchronous messages to the client. In the existing WAP standard, a push mechanism is not yet implemented. Although the push mechanism envisioned for the WAP standard is a true asynchronous push because there is no push mechanism set forth in the WAP standard yet, the functionality provided by the apparatus encompasses a significant number of applications utilizing the push mechanism.

Analogously, alerts and notifications, also storable at the message cache 44 can be provided to the client. Alerts and notifications include, for instance, PIM notifications in which appointment messages can be sent to the client during a time leading up to a scheduled meeting, thereby providing a

constant reminder of an upcoming event. Also, pages and messages from other users can also be transmitted to the client utilizing an embodiment of the present invention. And, location-based notifications to provide location-based information to a user of the client, such as road conditions, can also be
5 provided to the client. And, OOB messages forming news bulletins, humorous, or motivational messages can also be provided to the client during pendency of a request for content.

Figure 2 illustrates a sequence diagram, shown generally at 82, in which signaling between the client 12, WAP gateway 22, and origin server is
10 shown. Here, the WAP gateway is shown to include the request handler 28, the transaction cache 30, and HTTP client 32. The sequence diagram 82 illustrates the generation of a generic request by the client without the return by the WAP gateway of an OOB message.

First, and as indicated by the segment 84, a WSP request is generated
15 by the client and delivered to the request handler 28. Responsive thereto, a load resource (URL) call and request ID is caused to be generated, indicated by the segment 86. Thereafter, a request resource signal including a URL is generated, indicated by the segment 88. Such request is provided to the HTTP client 32 which, in turn generates an HTTP request indicated by the segment
20 92 and provided to the origin server 14. The content is returned as part of an HTTP reply, indicated by the line segment 94.

The HTTP reply is passed by the client 32 to the transaction cache 30 indicated by the segment 96 and the transaction cache forwards the HTTP reply to the request handler 28 here indicated by the segment 98. Filtering is
25 selectably performed at the filter 56, and the content, here in the form of a WSP reply, indicated by the segment 102 is provided to the client.

Figure 3 illustrates a sequence diagram, shown generally at 104, here representing the sequencing of signals during operation of an embodiment of the present invention in which an OOB message is provided to the client. The

OOB message is provided to the client responsive to an additional request by the client for additional content.

First, a WSP request, indicated by the segment 106, including a flagged URL is generated by the client and provided to the request handler 28. The request handler causes a WSP reply formed of the OOB message to be provided to the client, indicated by the segment 108. And, the request handler causes generation of a load resource (URL): request ID signal indicated by the segment 112. Such signal is provided to the transaction cache 30 which generates a request resource (URL) signal, indicated by the segment 114 to the HTTP client 32. The HTTP client generates, in response thereto, an HTTP request here indicated by the segment 116 which is provided to the origin server 14. The origin server generates an HTTP reply, indicated by the segment 118 to the HTTP client which passes the reply, indicated by the segment 122, to the transaction cache 30 which, in turn, parses the reply, indicated by the segment 124, to the requesting handler.

During the request and reply for the content from the origin server, the client generates a WSP request for actual content, indicated by the line 126 which is provided to the request handler. Responsive thereto, the request handler generates a fetch resource (request ID) signal indicated by the segment 128 which is provided to the transaction cache. In the sequencing shown in the Figure, display of the OOB message at the client is completed prior to the availability of the requested content. As shown, the signals represented by the segments 126 and 128 are generated prior to return of the requested content, indicated by the segments 118 and 122. When the content is provided to the request handler 28, the content is selectably parsed by the filter 56. Thereafter, the actual content is provided to the client as a WSP reply indicated by the segment 132.

Figure 4 illustrates a sequence diagram, shown generally at 134, here also representing the sequencing of signals during operation of an embodiment of the present invention in which an OOB message is provided to the client.

In contrast to the sequence diagram shown in Figure 3, the sequence diagram represents a situation in which delivery of the requested content is provided to the WAP gateway prior to completion of an OOB message at the client.

Again, however, the OOB message is provided to the client responsive to an
5 additional request by the client for additional content.

First, and as indicated by the segment 136, a WSP request, including a flagged URL, is generated by the client and provided to the request handler 28. The request handler returns a WSP reply formed of an OOB message to the client indicated by the segment 138. And, the request handler causes
10 generation of a load resource (URL): request ID signal, indicated by the segment 142. Such signal is provided to the transaction cache 30 which generates a request resource (URL) signal indicated by the segment 144, to the HTTP client 32. The HTTP client generates, in response thereto, an HTTP request, here indicated by the segment 146, which is provided to the origin
15 server 14. The origin server generates an HTTP reply, indicated by the segment 148, to the HTTP client. The reply includes the content requested by the client. The HTTP client 32, in turn, parses the reply, indicated by the segment 152, to the transaction cache, here to be stored at the content memory cache thereof.

20 When the display period of the OOB message is completed, the client generates a WSP request, indicated by the segment 156, for delivery thereto of the actual content. The request is provided to the request handler 28 which, in turn, generates a fetch resource (request ID) signal indicated by the segment 158. The content, already stored at the content memory cache is retrieved
25 therefrom, and returned, in the form of an HTTP reply, indicated by the segment 162, to the request handler. The content is selectably parsed by the filter 56, and the actual content is thereafter provided to the client 12 in the form of a WSP reply, indicated by the segment 164.

Figure 5 illustrates a communication system, shown generally at 176, in
30 which another embodiment of the present invention is operable. In the

exemplary implementation, the communication system includes a client, here a mobile station 12 coupled to a gateway 22 by way of a radio channel 18. In other implementations, the client forms a wireline device, and the communication path forms a wireline connection, rather than a radio link.

5 While the gateway 22 of the exemplary implementation corresponds generally to the gateway 22 shown in Figure 1 to form a portion of the communication system 10, in other implementations, the gateway is constructed in other manners.

The communication system 176 is shown further to include a proxy
10 device 178 coupled to the gateway 22, such as by way of a packet data network (not shown). A push-capable device 182 is coupled to the proxy as is also an origin server 184. During operation of an embodiment of the present invention, an asynchronous message generated by the server 184 is provided to the client 12 without the need of the client 12 to generate a polling request.
15 In operation, the client 12 generates a client request which is transmitted over the radio link 18 through the gateway 22 and to the proxy 178 to request server-initiated information to be sent to the client. The push-capable device 182, here a push server, substitutes the answer to the client request with a pending server-initiated message. The push-capable device 182 includes a
20 push interface to receive push requests to the client and is able to perform the push operation.

Figure 6 illustrates a sequence diagram, shown generally at 188,
representative of the signaling of messages generated during operation of an embodiment of the present invention by which to provide an asynchronous
25 message, here a push message, generated by the push-capable device 182 to the client 12. Communications effectuated with the push-proxy 178 and the origin server 184 are also noted in the sequence diagram. A request, indicated by the segment 192, is generated by the client 12 in conventional manner and communicated to the proxy device 178. The proxy 178, in turn, forwards the
30 request, indicated by the segment 194, to the origin server 184. And, in

conventional manner, the origin server generates a response, indicated by the segment 196, which is routed to the proxy device and, in turn, as indicated by the segment 202, back to the client 12. Such sequence of requests and responses thereto between the client and the origin server represent

5 conventional operation of a client-server system.

A push message, here indicated by the segment 204, is generated, asynchronously, by the push-capable device 184 and provided to the proxy 178. When a request, indicated by the segment 206, subsequently generated by the client is routed to the proxy device 178, the push message, previously
10 provided to the proxy, is returned, indicated by the segment 208, to the client. Thereby, the asynchronous message generated by the push-capable device 182 is provided to the client 12.

The request of the segment 206 is not ignored but, rather, is routed, indicated by the segment 212, onto the origin server. And, an indication of
15 communication of the push message to the client is provided to the push-capable device indicated by the segment 214. Meanwhile, the request, indicated by the segments 208 and 212, routed to the origin server cause the origin server to generate a response, indicated by the segment 216, which is routed to the push proxy. Responsive to a subsequent continuation request,
20 indicated by the segment 218, the response is returned, indicated by the segment 222, to the client.

Figure 7 again illustrates the communication system 176. Here, again, asynchronous messages are communicable to a client. In the Figure, two clients 12 are shown, and the push-capable device is shown is distributive
25 push service 232, representing the distributed nature of the push-capable device. Additionally, servers 234 and 236 along with a fire wall 238 are shown to form a portion of the communication system. The left-most (as shown) client 12 is capable of communicating with either of the servers 234 and 236, and the right-most (as shown) client 12 is able to communicate with
30 both of the servers and the fire wall 238.

Thereby, through operation of various embodiments of the present invention, an OOB message is provided to a mobile client. The OOB message can take almost any form, such as an alert, notification, a push message, an advertising message, or the like. A WAP compliant manner is provided by which to display such messages without the need of special hardware or software at either the client or the origin server. Seamless operation with the use of existing client devices and content providers-origin servers is possible. Also, the size required of the existing content is not increased. Therefore, operation of an embodiment of the present invention does not cause working content to fail when loaded by the client. Content providers and service developers are able to create their content and services without being required to be aware of the operation of an embodiment of the present invention.

The previous descriptions are of preferred examples for implementing the invention, and the scope of the invention should not necessarily be limited by this description. For example, the disclosed embodiments describe flagging the URLs prior to sending them to a mobile station. However, the gateway can be used to track URLs sent to a mobile station without the need to modify URLs.

We claim:

1. In a communication system having a client operable to communicate with an origin server by way of a communication path, an improvement of apparatus for facilitating communication of an asynchronous message upon the communication path to the client, said apparatus
5 comprising:
 - a request detector coupled to receive a first request generated by the client, the first request generated by the client for a first server-indicated reply message; and
 - a push message generator operable responsive to
10 detection by said request detector of the first request, said push message generator for substituting a push message for the first server-initiated reply message, and for sending the push message upon the communication path to the client, the push message forming the asynchronous message.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the communication system
15 comprises a proxy positioned in the communication path extending between the client and the origin server and wherein said request detector is positioned at the proxy.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the communication system further comprises a push-capable device coupled to the proxy and wherein
20 said push message generator is positioned at the push-capable device.
4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the proxy and the push-capable device form a single structural entity and wherein said request detector and said push message generator are co-located at the single structural entity.
5. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the push message forming the
25 asynchronous message generated by said push message generator is asynchronously provided by the push-capable device to the proxy, the push

message substituted for the first server-initiated reply message when said request detector detects the first request generated by the client.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein an indication of sending of the push message to the client by said push message generator is provided to the push-capable device to indicate communication of the push message forming the asynchronous message to the client.

7. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the communication system comprises a radio part, including network infrastructure, wherein the client comprises a mobile station and wherein said request detector and said push message generator are coupled to the network infrastructure.

8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the communication path extending between the client and the origin server further comprises a radio gateway, the radio gateway comprising:

an out-of-band message source coupled to receive at least one out-of-band message, the at least one out-of-band message selectably to be communicated to the client; and

a selector coupled to said out-of-band message source, said selector for selecting whether to communicate to the client a selected out-of-band message to which said out-of-band message source is coupled to receive.

9. In a method for communicating in a communication system having a client operable to communicate with an origin server by way of a communication path, an improvement of a method for facilitating communication of an asynchronous message upon the communication path to the client, said method comprising:

generating a first request by the client upon the communication path, the first request for a first server-initiated reply message to be returned to the client;

detecting the first request generated during said operation

5 of generating;

substituting a push message for the first server-initiated reply message, the push message forming the asynchronous message; and

providing the push message to the client.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising the operation of

10 positioning a proxy in the communication path extending between the client and the origin server.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said operation of detecting is performed at the proxy.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the operation of

15 coupling a push-capable device to the proxy.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said operation of substituting comprises generating the push message at the push-capable device.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said operation of substituting further comprises providing the push message generated at the push-capable

20 device to the proxy.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein substitution of the push message for the first server-initiated reply message is performed at the proxy.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said operation of providing the push message comprises asynchronously providing the push message to the

25 proxy.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the push message is provided to the client subsequent to detection during said operation of detecting the first request.

18. An improvement of apparatus for the gateway which provides an
5 out-of-band message to the client, said apparatus comprising:

an out-of-band message source coupled to receive at least one out-of-band message, the at least one out-of-band message selectably to be communicated to a client;

10 a selector coupled to said out-of-band message source, said selector can select whether to communicate to said client a selected out-of-band message to which said out-of-band message source is coupled to receive.

19. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein said client comprises a user interface for displaying the out-of-band message and wherein said selector further selects a time period during which the out-of-band message is
15 displayed at the user interface.

20. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said user interface of said client further comprises a user input actuator actuatable by a user of said client, wherein the time period during which said selector selects the out-of-band message to be displayed comprises an unlimited duration, and wherein
20 actuation of the user input actuator terminates display of the out-of-band message at the user interface.

21. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein said out-of-band message source comprises an out-of-band memory cache in which the at least one out-of-band message is stored, the out-of-band message accessed responsive to
25 selection by said selector of the out-of-band message to be communicated to said client.

22. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising:

a filter coupled to receive content as communicated to said client by a content source, said filter can parse said content to identify whether said content contains a link, subsequently selectable at said client, to request retrieval of subsequent content;

- 5 wherein the data communicated between said client and said content source comprises content stored at said content source, said content communicated to said client responsive to a request therefore.

23. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising:
a substitute request generator coupled to said selector, said
10 substitute request generator can generate a substitute request for said subsequent content;

- wherein said client is further operable to generate a client-generated request for said subsequent content associated with said request communicated upon a communication path to the gateway, said selector
15 coupled to receive said client-generated request for said subsequent content.

24. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein said selector selects communication of said selected out-of-band message to be communicated to said client responsive to detection of said client-generated request during pendency of said substitute request for the additional content.

- 20 25. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein said out-of-band message source comprises an out-of-band memory cache, wherein selection of said out-of-band message stored at the out-of-band memory cache responsive to detection of said client-generated request further causes an anchor pointing to a selected memory location of said out-of-band memory cache.

- 25 26. The apparatus of claim 25 further comprising a subsequent content memory cache coupled to receive said subsequent content provided responsive to generation of the substitute request, said subsequent content memory cache can store said subsequent content therein.

27. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein said subsequent content, stored at said subsequent content memory cache, is provided to said client subsequent to delivery thereto of said out-of-band message.

28. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein said client is further operable
5 to generate an actual-content request subsequent to delivery thereto of said out-of-band message, said subsequent content stored at said subsequent content memory cache provided to said client responsive to said actual-content request.

29. A method for providing an out-of-band message to a client
10 operable in a communication system in which data is communicated between the client and at least a first content source upon a communication path including a radio part, a network part, and a gateway; said method comprising:
storing the out-of-band message at the gateway; and
selectably providing the out-of-band message stored during said
15 operation of storing to the client.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein the client comprises a user interface and said method further comprises the additional operation of displaying the out-of-band message at the user interface for at least a selected time period.

20 31. The method of claim 29 comprising the additional operations, subsequent to said operation of storing, of:
generating an initial request at the client to retrieve first content stored at the first content source;
providing the first content to the gateway; and
25 parsing the first content to identify whether the first content contains a link subsequently selectable at the client to request retrieval of subsequent content.

32. The method of claim 31 comprising the additional operations, subsequent to said operation of parsing of:

providing the first content to the client; and

5 generating a client-generated request by the client for the subsequent content identified by the link.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein the out-of-band message selectably provided to the client during said operation of selectably providing is provided to the client responsive to the client-generated request.

34. The method of claim 33 comprising the additional operations, subsequent to said operation of selectably providing the out-of-band message of:

generating, at the gateway, a substitute request for the subsequent content; and

10 storing the subsequent content at the gateway provided thereto responsive to generation of the substitute request.

35. The method of claim 34 comprising the additional operations, subsequent to said operation of storing the subsequent content, of:

retrieving the subsequent content stored at the gateway; and

providing the subsequent content to the client.

20 36. The method of claim 35 wherein said operation of providing the subsequent content to the client occurs only subsequent to a selected time period after the out-of-band message is provided to the client.

37. The method of claim 29 wherein the client comprises a user interface, the user interface including a display and a user input actuator

25 actuable by a user, said method further comprising:

displaying the out-of-band message at the display;

actuating the user input actuator; and

removing the out-of-band message displayed at the display responsive to actuation of the user input actuator.

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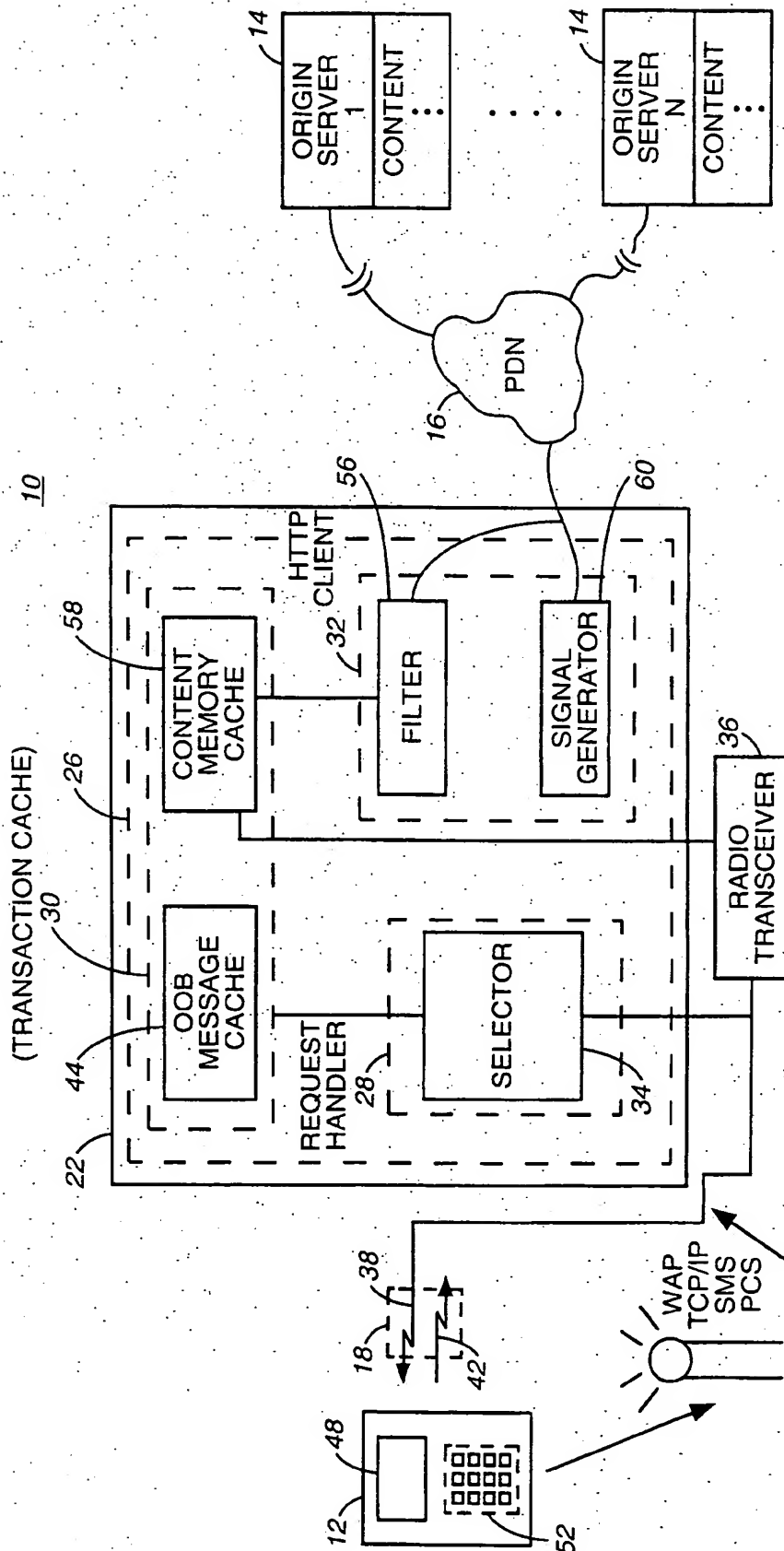
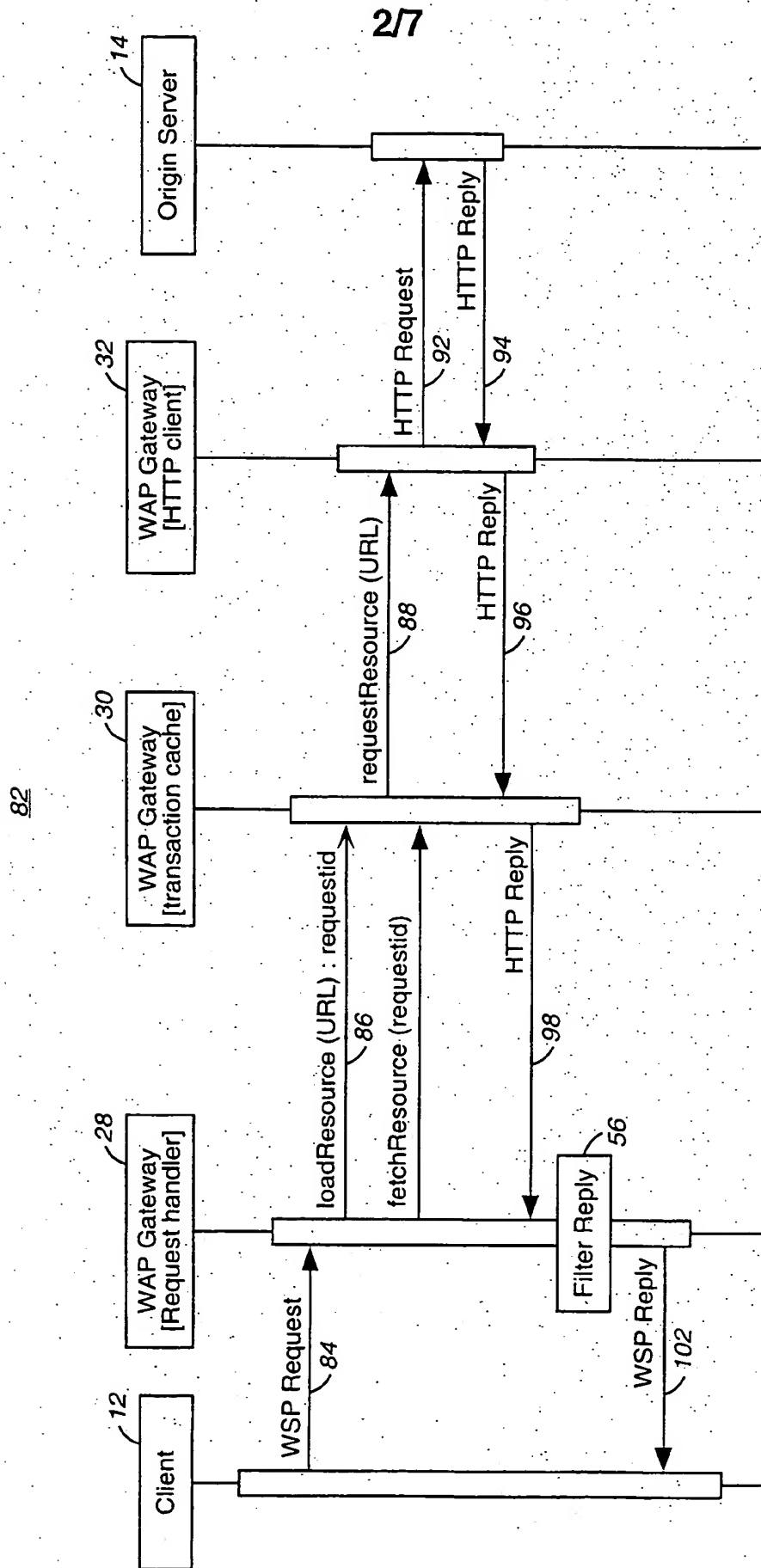


FIG. 1



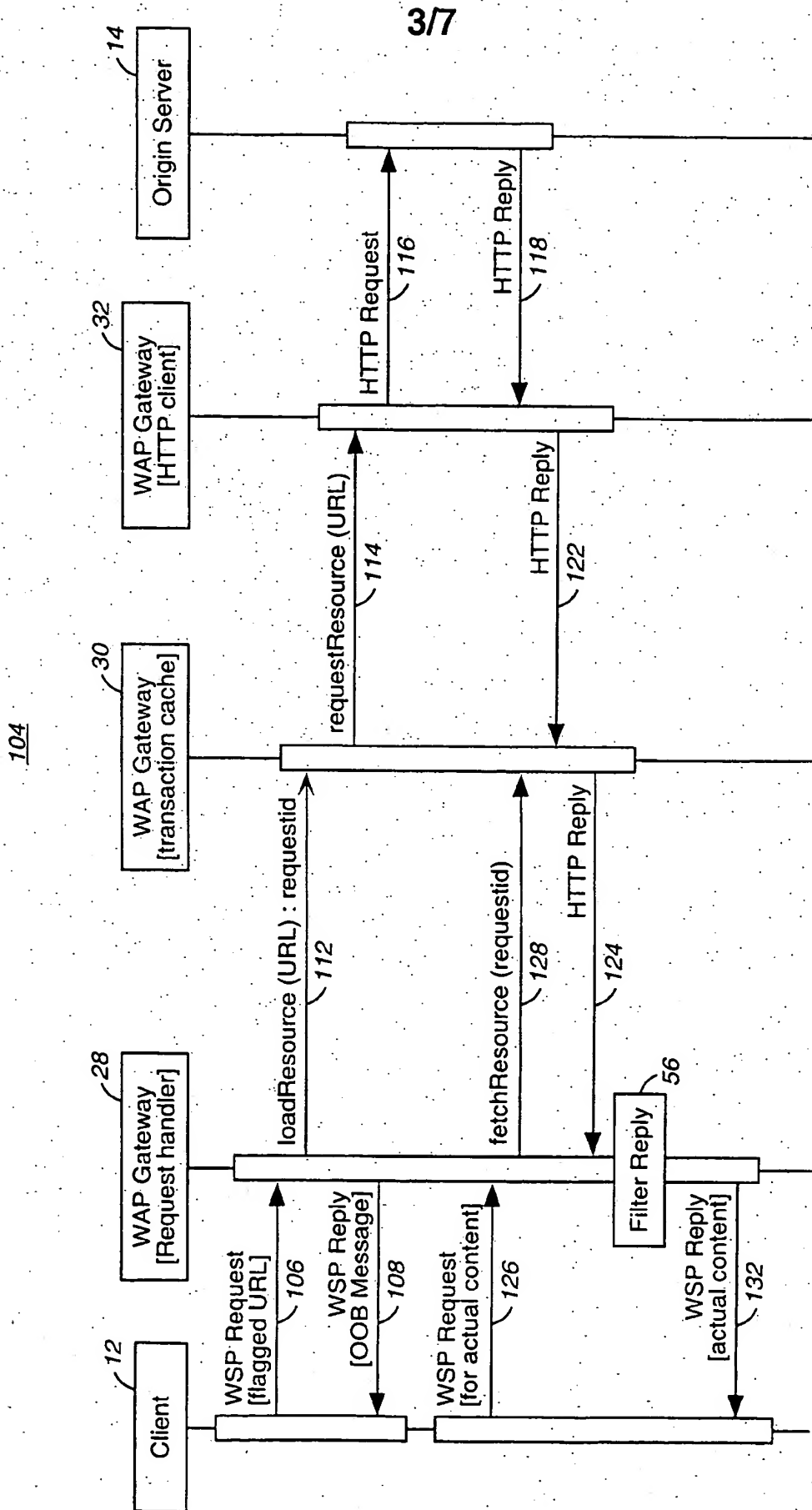


FIG. 3

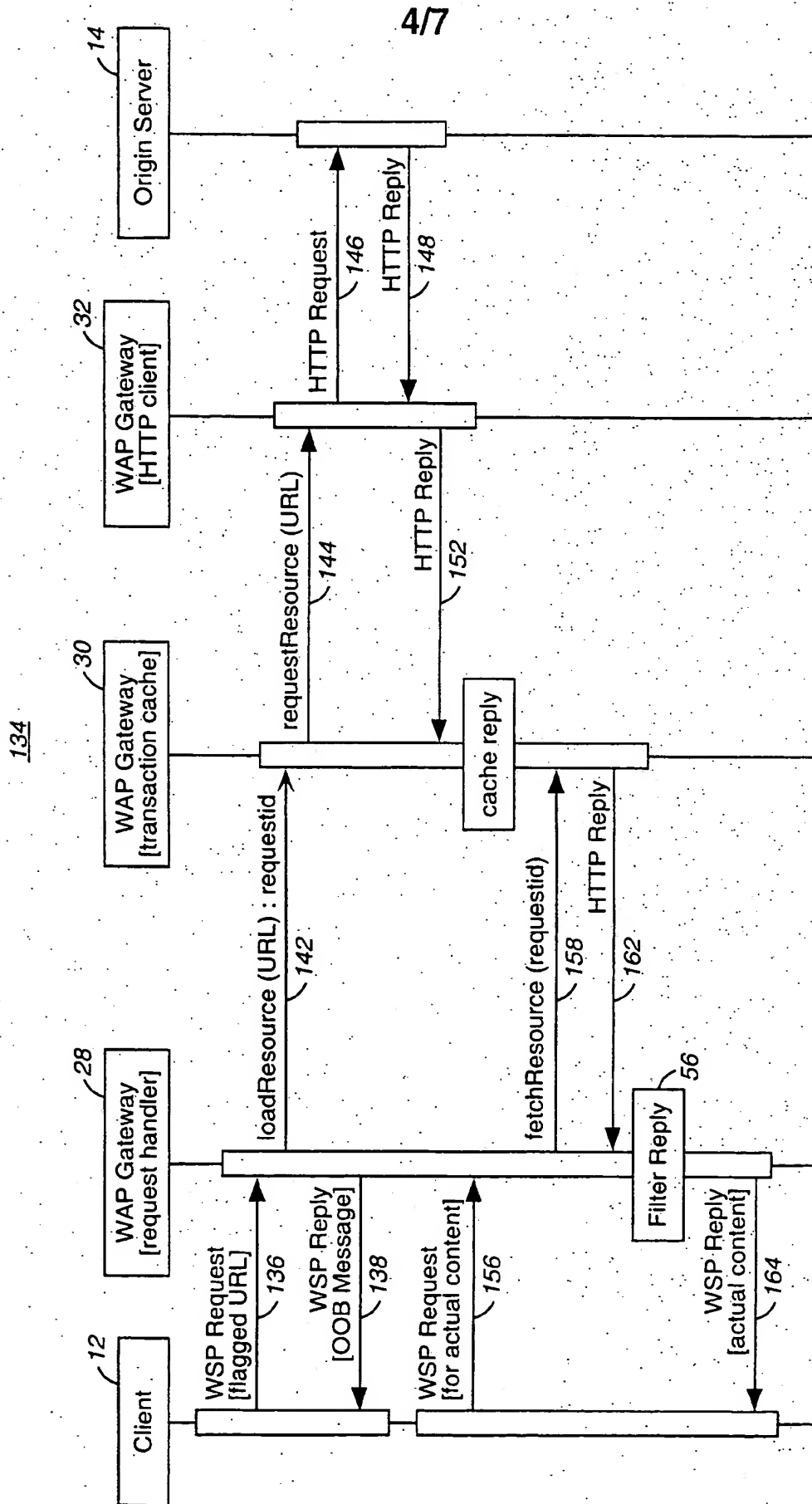
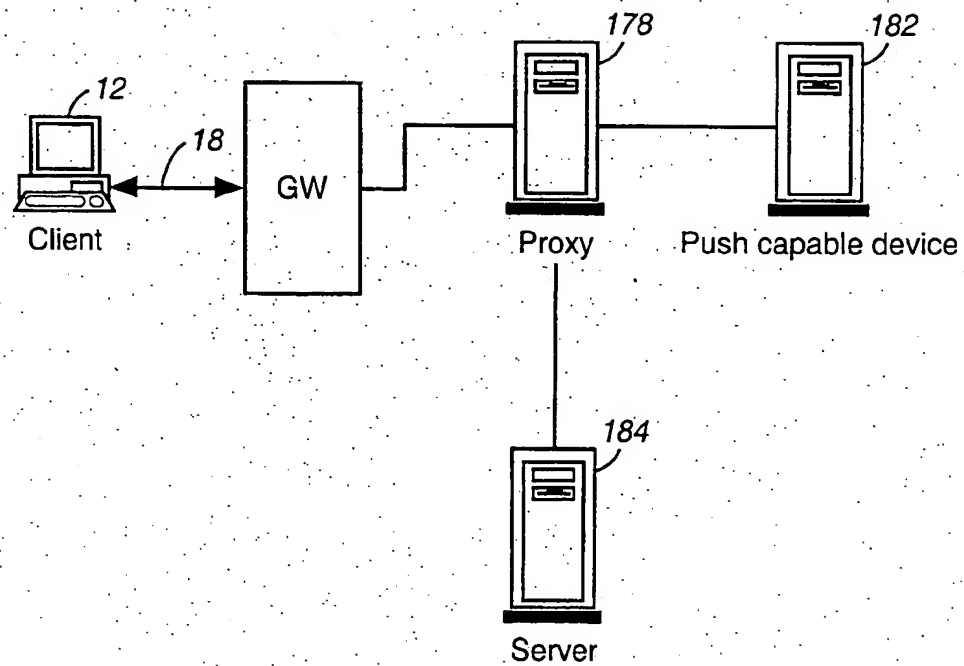


FIG. 4

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176**FIG. 5**

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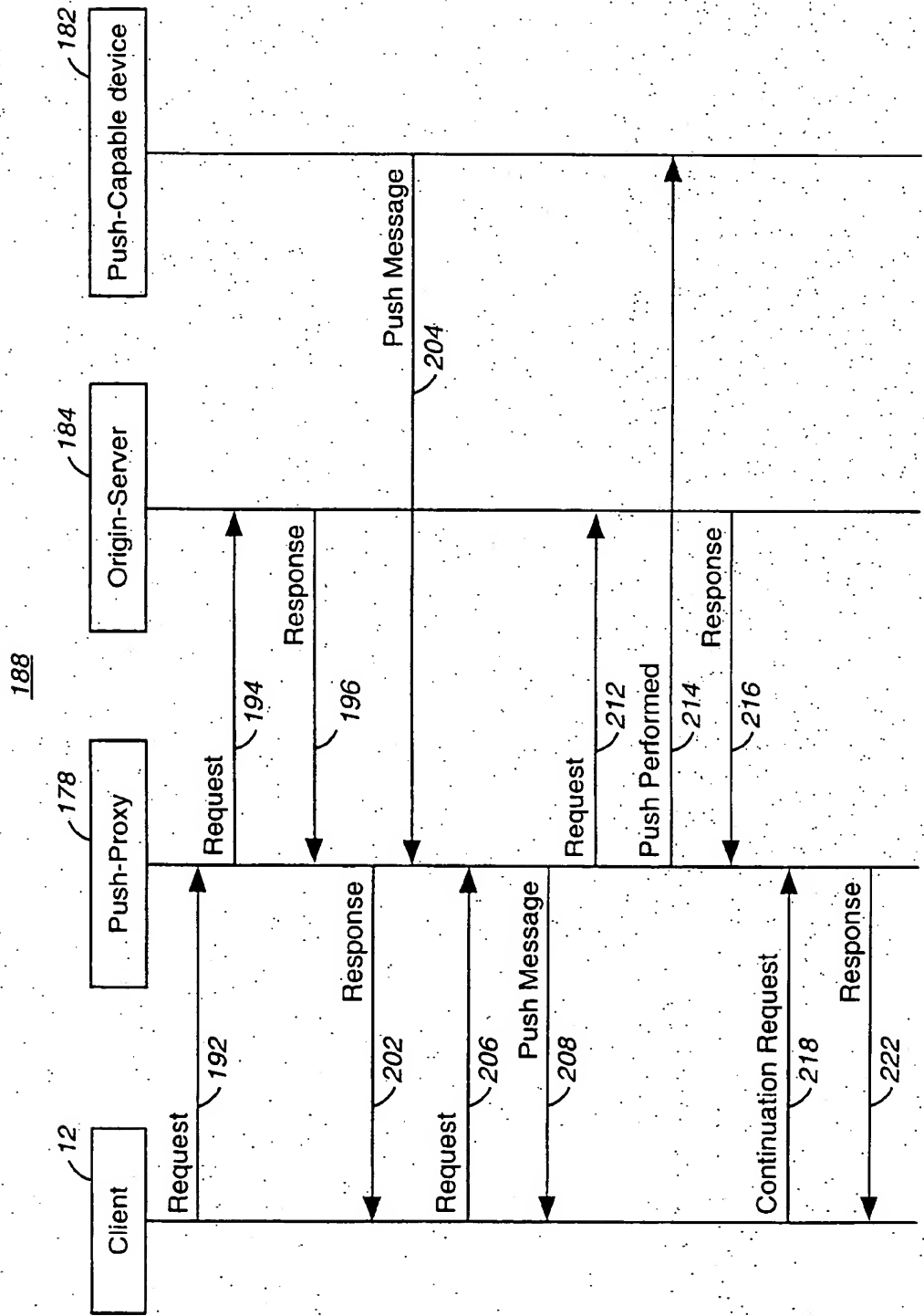


FIG. 6

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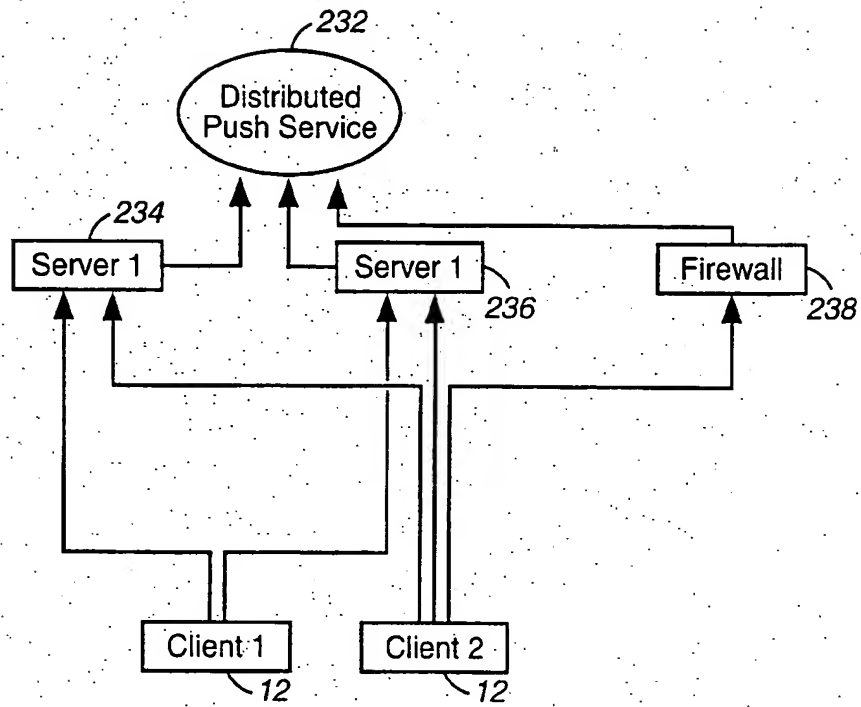


FIG. 7